

LEVELED LITERACY INTERVENTION SUCCESS RATE IN THE THIRD GRADE
GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM

by

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Abstract

The effect of Leveled Literacy Intervention were examined using a group of ten third grade students at Crosswell Elementary School. The students were selected to participate by using their Fall 2014 MAP score. Students that had a Fall 2014 MAP score of ≤ 189 were placed into the research group. The focus of the research was to determine if Leveled Literacy Intervention had an effect on the reading levels for students identified as struggling readers, if their MAP scores from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015 had a minimum of double digit growth, and what the parents of students participating in the program reported relative to the program's helpfulness to their child. The data from the research group shows that all students increased their reading levels, eighty percent of students showed double digit MAP growth during the implementation of the program, and ninety percent of the parents reported that they believed their student no longer struggled reading grade level texts. Additionally, four students were dismissed from the program prior to the end of the twenty week cycle because they had reached and maintained grade level reading proficiency based on their reading level when given the leveled assessment. Together, these findings suggest that Leveled Literacy Intervention has a significant impact on students in third grade that have been identified as struggling readers.

Keywords: MAP, Leveled Literacy Intervention, struggling readers

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Struggling readers often have a difficult time academically. Unless they have been diagnosed with a learning disability, struggling readers are in danger of falling through the cracks of the educational system. Leveled Literacy Intervention, commonly referred to as LLI, is often used in resource classrooms with students identified as struggling readers. This same program could be used to increase the reading ability and achievement level of students through instruction in the general education classroom.

Purpose Statement

This study will investigate the effectiveness of an intensive in-class literacy program, Leveled Literacy Intervention, on MAP and reading level scores for students identified as struggling readers in a 3rd grade classroom. With various program options available for teachers to use for reading intervention, it is important to investigate each program independently. Much research has been conducted in regards to other programs; however, the amount of research available for Leveled Literacy Intervention is minimal. This research study will explore the success of Leveled Literacy Intervention and the teacher-researcher will share the findings for others to view.

Problem Statement

Observations of the researcher over the past three years indicates that many students enter the third grade classroom already behind and struggling in reading. Most intensive literacy programs are designed for and are being used by kindergarten and first grade teachers to instruct the students that have been identified as struggling readers. A minimal amount of research exists to explore the benefits of an in-class reading intervention program for students in third grade and beyond. However, there is research that examines the problems encountered by students that do not read proficiently once they complete third grade.

Research conducted by Harvey (2011) between two well-known intervention models: Reading Recovery and Leveled Literacy Intervention, provides evidence that both programs are successful. However, Reading Recovery is only available to first grade students in the School District of Pickens County. Additionally, only certified Reading Recovery teachers can administer instruction from that particular program. In the School District of Pickens County, the LLI program can be administered by any certified teacher with district level training. Furthermore, when LLI instruction is given in the general education classroom setting, the students are participating in both whole group reading instruction and the target program. This also alleviates any negative feelings students may encounter from the pull-out model when they receive their reading intervention instruction in a resource classroom setting.

Justification of the Study

The information obtained and conclusions drawn from this study could be used to promote the use of programs designed to help struggling readers reach grade level reading expectations through Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI). This type of intensive reading program has the potential to help struggling readers move to the 4th grade on reading level with their peers. It is known that in grades 1-3 students are learning to read, and students in grades 4 and up are reading to learn. It is imperative that students reach grade-level reading standards for success in all content areas. It is critical that students that struggle to read, but are not identified with a disability, are given rigorous reading intervention.

Readers that advance to each subsequent grade without the ability to read on their grade level have a higher likelihood to drop out of high school and encounter behavior problems in the classroom.

Evidence to support the assertion that reading ability impacts the dropout rate of high school students can be found in the research completed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “One in six children who are not reading proficiently in third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers.” (Hernandez, 2003, p. 3)

According to Metsäpelto et al. (2014, “Evidence has linked academic difficulties to increases in externalizing problems” (p. 1). This research suggests that students that are struggling to achieve academically externalize their frustration through inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors in the classroom.

The ability to read has a significant impact on the life and future of students; therefore, the findings of this study might be used to promote development of other programs that offer literacy intervention with students in third grade and beyond. Leveled Literacy Intervention has been selected as the program for this research project because it is utilized in the School District of Pickens County where the researcher is a teacher and the strong recommendation by the creators of the program that the student to teacher ratio remain 3:1 throughout the length of the intervention.

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized in this research study that students that participate in Leveled Literacy Intervention in a general education classroom, will show growth on their Measures of Academic Progress scores and their reading record leveled results.

Research Questions

Is the reading level affected by leveled literacy intervention (number of reading levels increased during the duration of the study) for students identified as struggling readers?

Do students who receive leveled literacy intervention show a minimum of a double digit growth in MAP scores from Fall to Spring?

What do the parents of third grade students that received leveled literacy intervention report relative to its helpfulness?

Definition of Terms

Leveled Literacy Intervention, commonly referred to as LLI, is a small group, supplementary literacy intervention designed for students who find reading and writing difficult. These students are the lowest achievers in literacy at their grade level and are not receiving another literacy intervention. The program was created by Fountas and Pinnell.

MAP, Measures of Academic Progress, is a computer based adaptive test that is given three times per academic year. The purpose is to help teachers, parents, and administrators improve learning for all students and make informed decisions to promote a child's academic growth.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The ability to read has a significant impact on the lives of people every day throughout the world. There are numerous studies on how the inability to read impacts the high school graduation rate, poverty, self-esteem, and classroom behaviors. However, there is not a substantial amount of literature available for specific reading and literacy programs that are designed to bring elementary age students to the desired reading level. The lack of research available for review could be attributed to the early stages of the Leveled Literacy Intervention program as an intervention for struggling readers. It is important to note that the Leveled Literacy Intervention program, created by famed literacy experts Fountas and Pinnell, has only been utilized as an intervention program for the past eight years.

For the purpose of this literature review, two studies were reviewed. These studies were selected based on the specificity to the Leveled Literacy Intervention program and the similarities they contain to this research project. Other research was also evaluated that provides evidence of the problem and the previous attempted solutions. The review of literature for this study will be organized by paragraphs. The first paragraph will highlight noted research studies and the results of those studies that correlate with the current research that is being conducted. The literature review will also include a section that provides a brief history of the research problem. Finally, there will be a section that highlights important literature relating to the research topic, subtopics that impact literacy, and the current legislation being developed to address the importance of the ability to read.

The first study, published by Heinemann in 2011, provides a comprehensive overview of the success of the Leveled Literacy Intervention program after serving 4,881 elementary age

students spanning from kindergarten through fifth grade. Leveled Literacy Intervention was established as an intervention method in the United States in 2006. It was designed, in part, as an intervention program that provided an alternative to the Reading Recovery program that had been widely utilized throughout the country. “LLI is a scientifically-based system that is designed to prevent literacy difficulties rather than correct long-term failure. It has been highly successful in achieving its goal of cutting across the path of literacy failure and bringing children to grade level performance in hundreds of schools.” (Leveled Literacy Intervention, Blue Guide, p. 1) The Heinemann study documented that “Sixty-eight percent of students that participated in the Leveled Literacy Intervention program demonstrated an instructional reading level at least three times higher than their pre-Leveled Literacy Intervention level.” The evidence in the study supports the utilization of the program for struggling readers in helping them to reach grade level reading through participation in Leveled Literacy Intervention.

The second study was conducted by The University of Memphis and Texas Tech University. The data was collected throughout the year 2006, and the findings were published in 2008 at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. The population for this study included one hundred sixty five students across twenty two elementary schools. However, the prime focus of this study was on teacher experience and evaluation of the program. Respondents reported that 90.3% believed that Leveled Literacy Intervention had a positive impact on the vast majority of the students that had participated in the program. The research also elaborated on teacher training for implementation of the program, teacher experience with literacy programs, and teacher attitudes about the program. While the teacher information does not provide a direct impact on the research study at hand, the information is valuable to consider when conducting additional research in the future or expanding on this study. Teacher

engagement in the program and their attitudes about the success and ease of use of the program are vital components to student success.

A study conducted in 1997 indicated that “Students who do not possess the expected reading skills for their grade level often fall behind their peers, making it difficult to regain lost ground without intensive intervention.” (Lesnick, Goerge, Smithgall, & Gwynne, 2010, p. 8) This further indicates the importance of early reading intervention for students. The success of the program in grades kindergarten through two was documented in a 2010 report by the Center for Educational Policy. They found that, “Across the three grade levels, the current study found that LLI positively impacts K-2 student literacy achievement in rural and suburban settings. Further, we determined that LLI is effective with ELL students, students with special education designation, and minority students in both rural and suburban settings.” (CREP, 2010, p. 6) Although Leveled Literacy Intervention was originally designed for students in kindergarten to second grade, the success rate and achievement of students in the program has prompted the founders to create an additional component to their intervention program that allows teachers to work with third to eighth grade students as well. While the most marked success in assisting students that are behind in reading occurs in the early grades, it is noteworthy that there is now a program that will provide a means for upper elementary grade teachers to work with struggling readers.

It is also important to note that all studies make strong statements on implementing Leveled Literacy Intervention with fidelity in order to gain the desired results. Groups should consist of three students and instruction should take place for thirty minutes per day, five days per week. Furthermore, Leveled Literacy Intervention instruction is given in addition to regular whole group reading instruction and should not be utilized as the only means of literacy

instruction for struggling readers. In the literature reviewed for this research project, students of all genders, races, and socio-economic backgrounds were included in the studies. Furthermore, students that were considered to be English Language Learners and students receiving assistance through resource programs were also included.

There have been numerous studies that highlight the importance of possessing the ability to read. The problems associated with the inability to read have been present for many years. Some of the first studies were conducted many years ago. Early intervention programs were created to assist struggling readers and the teachers that were working with them to achieve grade level reading. Some programs utilized in previous studies were: Reading Recovery, READ 180, and Intervention by Design. Leveled Literacy Intervention, or LLI, is one of the newest models being used for small group reading intervention.

The inability to read can impact students in many ways throughout their education. Many schools and school districts across the country are now focused on improving their graduation rates; therefore, they are conducting research studies on the reasons why students do not graduate from high school and enroll in college. They have found that students who are poor early readers are twice as likely to drop out of school when they reach high school (Kerschner & Connolly, 1991). The Annie E. Casey Foundation refers to the inability to read on grade level by the end of third grade as Double Jeopardy. One factor in determining the need for the current study is the fundamental role third grade plays in a child's future. Many studies have been done on graduation rates and incarcerations based on the abilities of students when they complete the third grade. According to one study, "Third grade is an important pivot point in a child's education, the time when students shift from learning to read and begin reading to learn. Interventions for struggling readers after third grade are seldom as effective as those in the early

years.” (Hernandez, 2011, p. 4) Additional evidence is supported in the study conducted in regards to a longitudinal analysis of third-grade students in 1996 and 1997. This study also indicated that approximately fifty five percent of students that were reading below grade level did not graduate from high school.

Self-esteem and self-concept are noted struggles that many people, including children, deal with during their lifetime. Poor feelings about one’s self can have a dramatic impact on the development and achievement of young children. Negative self-esteem can be compounded by struggles in school; specifically with reading struggles. Self-esteem is defined as the complication of feelings about ourselves that guides our behavior, influences our attitudes, and drives our motivation (Dedmond, 2009, p. 11). This evidence indicates that there is a correlation between reading ability and self-esteem.

Poor behavior choices can also be associated with poor reading skills. Students may choose to act out in the classroom due to their frustrations regarding their inability to read adequately or equal to those of their peers. According to Metsäpelto et al. (2014, “Evidence has linked academic difficulties to increases in externalizing problems” (p. 1). This research suggests that students that are struggling to achieve academically externalize their frustration through inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors in the classroom.

It has been widely reported and a long held belief that the ability or inability to read has a direct effect on the future success of students. While Math and Science have always received a great deal of attention in programs like Race to the Top and STEM, reading initiatives have not been given the same attention. However, with the new Read to Succeed program that is being implemented in many states, reading is at the forefront of education. Read to Succeed establishes a law that provides mandatory retention for students in third grade that do not read on level with

the state standardized test. This law provides further evidence that the ability to read on grade level by the end of third grade is a pivotal moment in future success of students. Because of this legislation, Leveled Literacy Intervention is an even more important tool in helping students to achieve required reading levels. In the state of South Carolina, legislation defines reading proficiency as, “(9) ‘Reading proficiency skills means the ability to understand how written language works at the word, sentence, paragraph, and text level and mastery of the skills, strategies, and oral and written language needed to comprehend grade-appropriate texts.’” (Education Oversight Committee, Peeler et al., 2014)

The importance of this research can be summed up in the following quote, “In short, literacy represents a key determinant of academic, social, and economic success (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). This chapter provided a review of literature that has been published that establishes the effectiveness of the Leveled Literacy Intervention program and an overview of subtopics that correlate with the research. In the next chapter, methodology used in this study will be detailed.

Chapter 3

Methodology

General Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of an intensive in-class literacy program, Leveled Literacy Intervention on MAP, Measures of Academic Progress, and reading curriculum test scores for students identified as struggling readers in a third grade classroom. The teacher-researcher will compare data of students that are selected to participate in the leveled literacy intervention group before, during, and after their participation in the program. Effectiveness of the program will be evaluated based on Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 scores on the Measures of Academic Progress, MAP, testing. The teacher-researcher will be evaluating student growth between each testing interval. Other data that will be evaluated includes student reading levels as evaluated using the Fountas and Pinnell scoring chart, as well as parent attitudinal surveys.

Research Design

The research design for this study includes both qualitative and quantitative measures. The analysis of MAP data and reading level scores are quantitative. The attitudinal survey of parents is qualitative. In this study the independent variable will be leveled literacy instruction. The dependent variables will be the MAP data and the attitudinal survey results of the parents. The controlled variables will be the leveled literacy intervention instructional materials and instructional method.

Research Participants

The target population utilized in this study is third graders that have been identified as struggling readers. Several criteria will be used for determining which students are selected as

participants in the study. First, students have to be entering third grade for the 2014-2015 school year. Next, students Fall 2014 Measures of Academic Progress testing scores had to be <189. Additionally, students could not receive leveled literacy intervention in the general education classroom if they are already being served by the resource department at the school. All students have to receive their intervention from their classroom reading teacher. For the purposes of this study, the reading teacher is the teacher-researcher.

In this study each group will consist of two or three students as outlined in the Leveled Literacy Intervention program. These groups will meet for twenty to thirty minutes five times per week. For this study there will be four groups of students participating in the research; therefore the total of the participants will equal ten third grade students with a Fall 2014 Measures of Academic Progress test score of <189. The students will range from eight to nine years old and will not be currently served by the resource department of the school. All students will be instructed and receive their intervention by the teacher-researcher at Crosswell Elementary School.

Research Instruments

Measures of Academic Progress testing, MAP, was the primary instrumentation used to collect pre and post data for this research project. The research is composed of three subtests: 1) Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, 2) bi-weekly reading records, and 3) benchmark assessments. The combination of the primary tests and the subtests will be used to determine the efficacy of the program. The subtests were selected because they provide on-going analysis of student progression within the intervention program. Additionally, parents of students participating in this research project will also complete an attitudinal survey before receiving intervention and

after receiving intervention. The survey will consist of six questions that utilize a rating scale

Research Methods

The teacher-researcher will keep a log of pertinent data in a notebook by student name that will track each student and their scores on the above named test and subtest areas. Parent attitudinal results will also be maintained in the data notebook.

The teacher-researcher will survey the parents prior to implementing the Leveled Literacy Intervention program and also when the students have completed ten weeks of the program. This will allow the teacher-researcher to be approximately half way through the intervention to monitor progress. Because Leveled Literacy Intervention is intended to move students quickly up to grade level reading, there should be obvious progress available to be reported by parents by week ten of instruction. Additionally, the teacher-researcher will give attitudinal surveys to parents at the end of twenty weeks of intervention.

In reference to the quantitative data, the teacher-researcher will monitor student scores and growth from their Fall 2014 Measures of Academic Progress scores. Students will take a Winter 2014 and Spring 2015 MAP test. The teacher-researcher will chart and graph student scores to analyze growth in reading. Other quantitative data will be collected bi-weekly as the participants complete their Fountas and Pinnell reading level assessment. The scores will be maintained to analyze student progress as they move through the intervention program. Finally, benchmark assessments and reading record scores will be charted and graphed by individual students to evaluate their progress and growth in the intervention program with the ultimate goal of having students reading on grade level by the end of the intervention program.

Assumptions and Limitations

The teacher-researcher will assume that the testing environment for Measures of Academic Progress testing and bi-weekly reading records will be consistent. During this research study, the teacher-researcher will assume that parents will complete the at-home segments of the program in order to achieve desired results.

The limitations in this study are minimal. The teacher-researcher will be the sole interventionist providing instruction for the student sample. The teacher-researcher will only be evaluating data as it pertains to the participants' reading scores on Measures of Academic Progress testing. Mathematics scores will not be evaluated. Additionally, the teacher-researcher will only evaluate the students that meet the specified selection criteria for participation, and the teacher-researcher will be the provider of instruction. Other grade levels, additional third grade classroom teachers, and other schools within the district will not be evaluated in the study.

This chapter outlined the methodology for the action research completed at Crosswell Elementary School by a single teacher-researcher. This chapter also outlined the limitations of the study as well as the testing instruments and methods associated with the study. The subsequent chapter will demonstrate the analysis of data.

Chapter 4

Results

In this chapter, the findings of a 20 week qualitative and quantitative study of the effect of leveled literacy intervention on the reading growth and success rate of ten third grade students will be analyzed. The data is presented in the form of tables and graphs followed by a narrative presentation of the same data. Specifically, this study addressed three separate and distinct research questions. One, is the reading level affected by leveled literacy intervention (number of reading levels increased during the duration of the study) for students identified as struggling readers; two, do students who receive leveled literacy intervention show a minimum of a double digit growth (ten points) on their individual MAP scores from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015; three, what do the parents of third grade students that received leveled literacy intervention report relative to its helpfulness. The measuring instruments used for this study were: Fall 2014 MAP scores, Spring 2015 MAP scores, growth points from Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 MAP scores, reading levels as identified by the leveled literacy intervention program, and attitudinal surveys completed by parents of students involved in the study prior to implementing LLI and after the twenty week study was concluded.

A total of ten students participated in the research study. The criteria identified for participating in the study included students with a Spring 2014 MAP score of <189. The parents of participants were given an attitudinal survey prior to beginning the program and after twenty weeks of the program (or upon dismissal from the program).

The data included in Table 4.1 was adapted from NWEA Measures of Academic Progress and will be explained in further detail below the chart.

Table 4.1: Student Growth as Measured by Pre and Post Assessment MAP Scores

Student	Fall 2014 Score	Spring 2015 Score	Growth
A	175	202	27 points or 15.4%
B	180	204	24 points or 11.76%
C	165	182	17 points or 10.3 %
D	173	180	7 points or 4.0%
E	173	189	16 points or 9.25%
F	183	197	14 points or 7.65%
G	168	194	26 points or 15.48%
H	163	176	13 points or 7.98%
I	169	208	39 points or 23.08%
J	183	197	14 points or 7.65%
Mean	173.2	192.9	19.7 points or 10.21%

Prior to being placed into leveled literacy intervention as part of the research study, the students' Spring 2014 MAP scores were evaluated to determine students that scored <189. Those students were selected to participate in the study. The students indicated in the chart above met the less than 189 cutoff score and were placed into the LLI program. At the conclusion of the study, the students' Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 results were evaluated for the growth points achieved from the Fall 2014 score to the Spring 2015 score. The percentage of increase for each student that participated in the study was also calculated. In this study, double digit growth is identified as an increase of ten or more points from the Fall 2014 MAP score to the Spring 2015 MAP score. Of the ten students that received leveled literacy intervention as a part of the study,

nine achieved a minimum of ten points (double digit) growth in their MAP scores. Additionally, the average MAP score increase was 19.7 points. This growth shows that, on average, students nearly doubled the targeted growth on the MAP assessment.

Table 4.2: Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 Percentile Rankings

Student	Fall % Range	Spring % Range	Overall % Growth
A	16	58	42
B	25	63	38
C	5	12	7
D	13	9	-4
E	10	24	14
F	32	44	12
G	7	36	29
H	4	5	1
I	8	73	65
J	32	44	12
Mean	15.2 %	36.8 %	21.6 % Growth

The data included in Table 4.2 was adapted from NWEA Measures of Academic Progress and will be explained in further detail in the following paragraph.

The analysis of percentile ranking growth points was another measurement tool used for this study. The scores were evaluated using data from students' Fall 2014 MAP scores and Spring 2015 MAP scores. Table 4.2 shows the data collected for each of the ten students participating in the study. Although percentile rankings were not considered as one of the

research questions, it does provide more insight into the achievements of the students that participated in the study and will be analyzed further in Chapter 5. As the chart indicates, the average percentile ranking growth for the study group was 21.6%. One of the ten students did not show progress at all and another student only grew by one percentile ranking. Seven of the ten students that received LLI grew in an overall percentage of 10% or higher.

Table 4.3: Pre and Post Instructional LLI Reading Levels

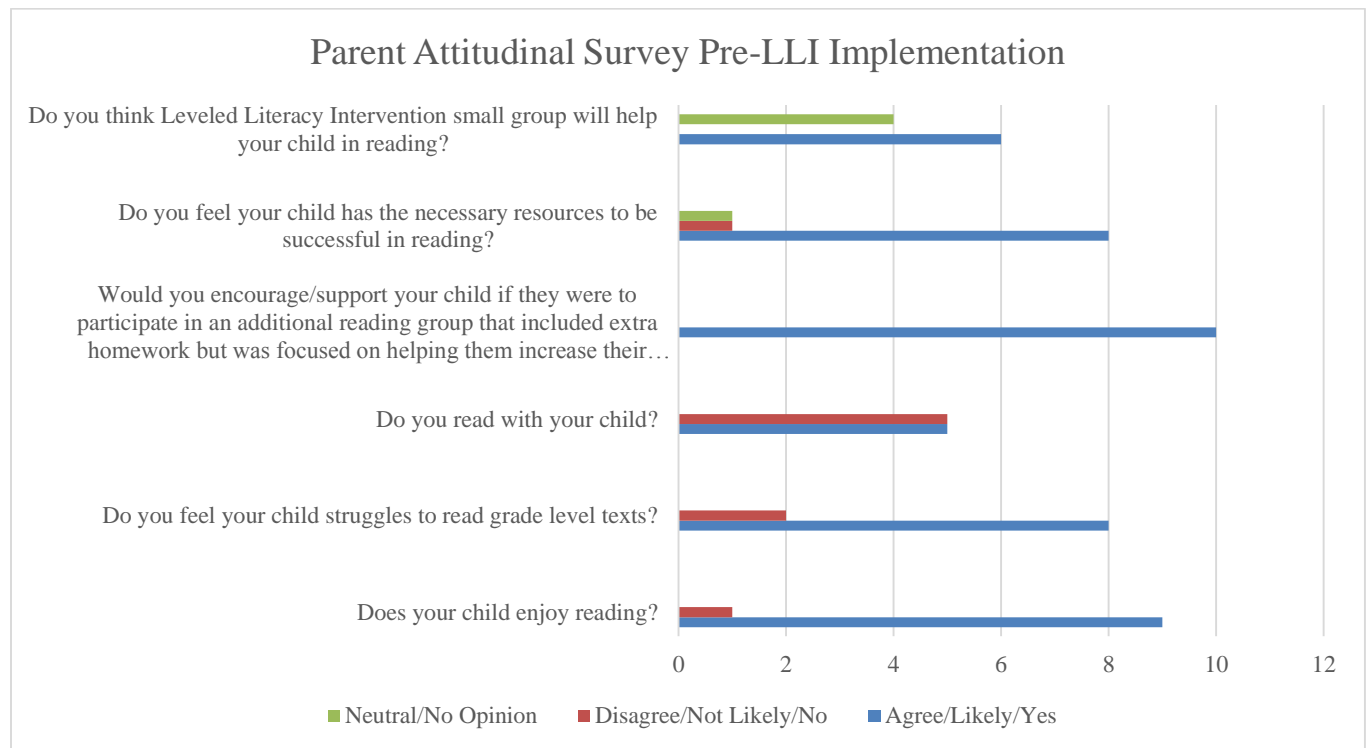
Student	Initial	Mid-Point (10 weeks)	Final (20 weeks)	Levels of Growth
A	H	L	Dismissed from Program	7
B	H	K	Dismissed from Program	7
C	A	E	J	9
D	D	I	L	8
E	B	D	K	9
F	J	M	Dismissed from Program	5
G	G	J	M	6
H	A	D	I	8
I	D	J	N	10
J	J	L	Dismissed from Program	5
Mean				7.4 Levels

Table 4.3 shows data that was evaluated using the reading level system developed by Fountas and Pinnell. This evaluation/correlation chart is part of the leveled literacy intervention program. Students that make progress show gains in their reading level (as identified by letters in the alphabet). In order to be considered as on grade level by the end of third grade, students must be reading on a minimum level of a letter O. Reading levels were assessed prior to beginning the

twenty week study, at the mid-point (ten week) of the study, and at the conclusion of twenty weeks of participation in the study. As the table indicates, the average letter level growth was 7.4 levels. The data shows that all students that participated in the study had an increase of a minimum of 5 reading levels (as based on the letter system).

It is important to note that the four students in the table identified as being dismissed from the program were dismissed because they had reached and maintained grade level reading proficiency based on their reading level when given the leveled assessment.

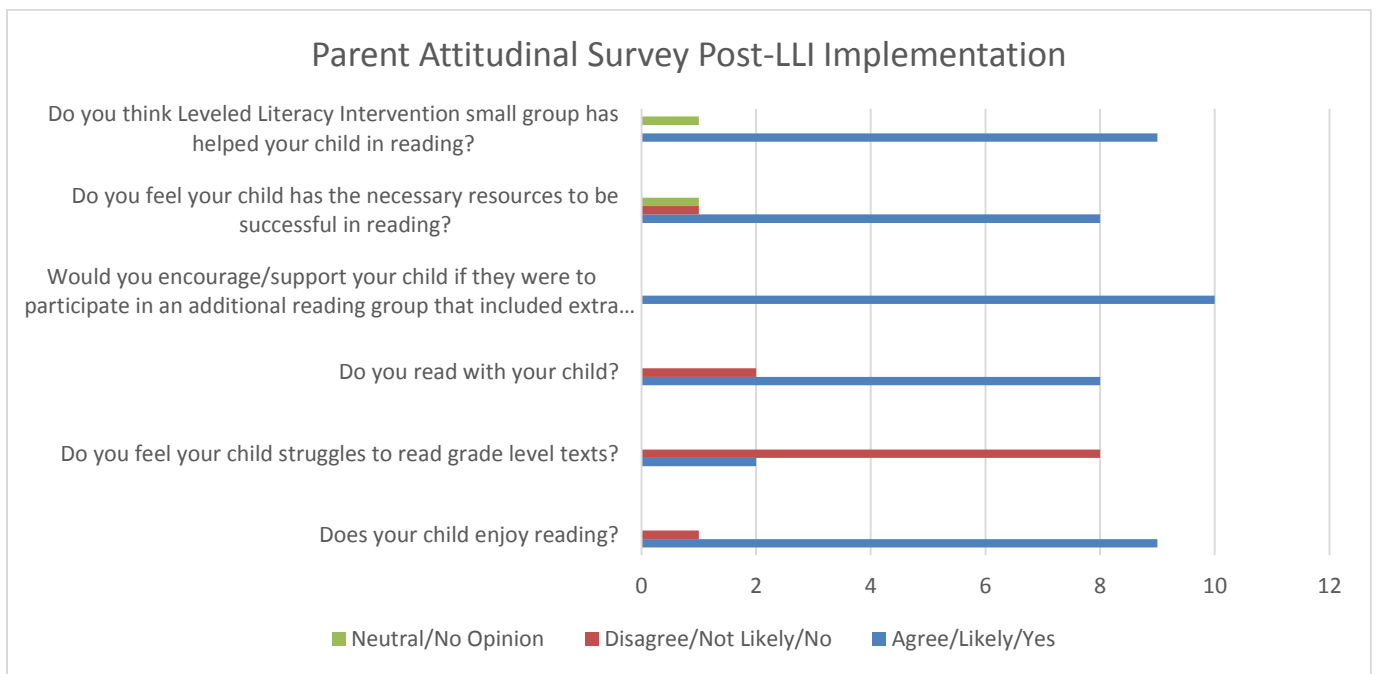
Table 4.4: Parent Survey Pre-LLI Implementation



The data included in Table 4.4 was derived from the parent attitudinal survey developed by the teacher-researcher. Table 4.4 identifies the results that parents gave prior to their students beginning the LLI program. All ten parents of the students involved in the research responded to the survey. The findings show that nine out of ten parents feel that their child does not enjoy

reading; while eight of ten parents indicated that their child struggles reading texts that are on-grade level. The response to the question regarding small group intervention helping students be more successful in reading indicated that six parents felt the small group setting would be beneficial to their child and four parents had no opinion. Half of the parents indicated that they read with their child and the other half responded that they did not read with their child. Most parents surveyed scored that they believed their child had the necessary resources to be successful in reading, and all parents reported that they would support and encourage their child in the additional reading groups; including ensuring they completed the extra homework associated with the program.

Table 4.5: Parent Survey Post LLI Implementation



The data included in Table 4.5 was derived from the parent attitudinal survey developed by the teacher-researcher. Table 4.5 identifies the results that parents gave after their child completed twenty weeks (or tested proficient) in the LLI program. All ten parents of the students involved in the research responded to the survey. The findings show that nine out of ten parents

feel that their child enjoys reading while eight of ten parents indicate that their child does not struggle reading texts that are on-grade level. The response to the question regarding small group intervention helping students be more successful in reading indicated that nine parents felt the small group setting was beneficial to their child while one parent remained neutral. Eight parents indicated that they read with their child. Eight parents surveyed scored that they believed their child had the necessary resources to be successful in reading, and all parents reported that they would support and encourage their child in the additional reading groups; including ensuring they completed the extra homework associated with the program. Nine out of ten parents surveyed reported that they believed the LLI program had been beneficial to their child in reading.

The findings of this study and the data presented will be further developed and discussed in Chapter 5 Discussion/Conclusions. Specifically, an analysis will be completed that compares pre-implementation and post-implementation data. The difference in pre and post implementation parent surveys will also be evaluated. Additionally, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations for action and further study will be offered.

Chapter 5

Summary

The purpose of this research was to study the effectiveness of an intensive in-class literacy program, Leveled Literacy Intervention, on MAP and text reading levels for students identified as struggling readers in a 3rd grade classroom. The measurement instruments used for this study were: Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 MAP scores, text reading levels identified by Fountas and Pinnell, and parent attitudinal surveys both pre and post program implementation. Raw MAP scores were evaluated to determine if students had achieved double digit growth for the testing period. MAP percentile rankings were also assessed to determine if students had an increase from Fall 2014 MAP scores to Spring 2015 MAP scores while participating in the LLI program. Additionally, Fountas and Pinnell text reading levels were measured to decide whether or not students had an increase in reading text levels. Finally, parent attitudinal survey results were compiled and disaggregated in order to evaluate the parents' perspective on the effectiveness of the LLI program. At the end of twenty week study, the results were compiled and evaluated. The teacher researcher determined that there was an overall increase in MAP scores, MAP percentile rankings, text reading levels, and parent attitudes towards the effectiveness of the program.

Conclusions and Implications

This type of intensive reading program has the potential to help struggling readers move to the 4th grade on reading level with their peers. It is known that in grades 1-3 students are learning to read, and students in grades 4 and up are reading to learn. It is imperative that students reach grade-level reading standards for success in all content areas. It is critical that students that struggle to read, but are not identified with a disability, are given rigorous reading intervention.

“LLI is a scientifically-based system that is designed to prevent literacy difficulties rather than correct long-term failure. It has been highly successful in achieving its goal of cutting across the path of literacy failure and bringing children to grade level performance in hundreds of schools.” (Leveled Literacy Intervention, Blue Guide, p. 1) Furthermore, “Students who do not possess the expected reading skills for their grade level often fall behind their peers, making it difficult to regain lost ground without intensive intervention.” (Lesnick, George, Smithgall, & Gwynne, 2010, p. 8) This further indicates the importance of early reading intervention for students. The ability to read is paramount for success in the classroom and to maintain life skills that allows students to become productive adults.

The evaluation of the original research questions and the associated data are as follows: The research indicated that the reading level of each student was affected by the LLI program for students identified as struggling readers. Ten out of ten students increased their text reading levels during the study. Four out of ten students increased and maintained text reading level proficiency and were dismissed from the program. The average text level growth was 7.4 levels from the beginning of the study to the conclusion. The research showed that seven out of ten students had a double digit increase in their MAP growth from Fall to Spring. Two students had single digit growth and one student had negative growth. The student with negative growth was referred to the Response to Intervention team and the school psychologist for an evaluation. Testing was scheduled for the 2015-2016 school year. Therefore, not all students had double digit increase in growth; however, the overall growth was 21.6%. Finally, parental attitudinal responses were evaluated. The most noted difference in the pre and post survey results was the parental response to being asked if they felt that their child struggled reading grade level texts.

The pre survey results indicated that eight of ten parents felt that their child struggled reading grade level texts. At the conclusion of the study, only two out of ten parents felt that their child struggled reading grade level texts.

Additional data that was evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the LLI program included a comparison of MAP scores from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015. The teacher-researcher found that students in the research group had an average growth of 19.7 raw points or 10.21%. All students that participated in the LLI study showed growth on their raw scores. The average student percentile ranking grew from 15.2% to 36.8%. Nine out of ten students in the research group had an increase in their percentile ranking on MAP scores when evaluating their Fall 2014 scores versus their Spring 2015 scores.

This research is supported by Heinemann, a publisher of professional resources and a provider of educational services for teachers. Heinemann is a division of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, a worldwide leader in Pre K-12 educational content and services. LLI is published by Heinemann and according to their literature, “LLI is a scientifically-based system that is designed to prevent literacy difficulties rather than correct long-term failure. It has been highly successful in achieving its goal of cutting across the path of literacy failure and bringing children to grade level performance in hundreds of schools.” (Leveled Literacy Intervention, Blue Guide, p. 1)

All research has limitations. This study was limited based on its small sample size. Either including more students in the study, using a different MAP score cut-off score to place students into the program, or collaborating with other teachers would increase the sample size. Lack of understanding about the program by the parents of students participating in the program may have been due to confusion or intimidation by the language of the attitudinal survey.

Recommendations

The findings of this research indicated an increase in student achievement using Heinemann's Leveled Literacy Intervention program. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for further research are made:

1. This study should include the effects of LLI on other content area achievement such as math, science, and social studies.
2. This study should include the effects on student achievement on the prescribed whole-group reading curriculum assessments.
3. This study should include a larger sample size through collaboration with another teacher or using a different MAP cut-off score.
4. There is a need to evaluate the effectiveness on the same students based on their future achievement in fourth grade.
5. There is a need for the teacher-researcher to host an informational session with parents of students participating in the study to increase their awareness and understanding of the program's purpose.

In summary, the impact of this study in the field of education is the indication of the importance intensive small-group, supplementary literacy intervention. This type of program helps teachers provide daily, small-group instruction for the lowest achieving students at their grade level. This instruction is in addition to the typical whole-group reading instruction. Furthermore, the study outlines the need to create and implement a program similar to this one for students beyond the elementary range. Unfortunately, students reach middle school still struggling to read. Programs such as LLI provide teachers with a method of instructing struggling students and could prove beneficial to all grade levels of struggling

readers. This study proves that intensive small-group instruction increases the reading abilities of students and should be considered as a front-line defense method for increasing the reading abilities of all students.

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Appendix A

Data Collection Timeline for Leveled Literacy Intervention Research

Instructional Week #	Activity	Collection Time Frame
	Identify students with “struggling reader” status and send home LLI group information & expectations	August 25 th -29 th
1	Complete the benchmark assessment (baseline data collection) and “level”	September 2 nd -5 th
2	Begin LLI group instruction	September 8 th -12 th
3	BAS Optional Assessment 1	September 15 th -19 th
4	Individual Student “Reading Record”	September 22 nd -26 th
5	BAS Optional Assessment 2	September 29 th -October 3 rd
6	Individual Student “Reading Record”	October 6 th -October 10 th
7	BAS Optional Assessment 3	October 13 th –October 17 th
8	Individual Student “Reading Record”	October 20 th -October 24 th
9	BAS Optional Assessment 4	October 27 th -October 31 st
	No LLI Groups/In-Service & Election Week	November 3rd-7th
10	Individual Student “Reading Record”	November 10 th -14 th
11	BAS Optional Assessment 5	November 17 th -November 21 st
	No LLI Groups/Thanksgiving Break	November 24th-28th
12	Individual Student “Reading Record”	December 1 st -5 th
13	BAS Optional Assessment 6	December 8 th -12 th
	No LLI Groups/Winter Fun Week	December 15th-19th
	Winter Break	December 22nd-January 2nd
14	LLI Groups Resume/Post-Break Review	January 5 th -January 9 th
	Mid-Year Benchmark Assessment	January 12 th -16 th
15	Individual Student “Reading Record”	January 19 th – 23 rd
16	BAS Optional Assessment 7	January 26 th -January 30 th
17	Individual Student “Reading Record”	February 2 nd -6 th
18	BAS Optional Assessment 8	February 9 th -13 th
19	Individual Student “Reading Record”	February 16 th –20 th
20	BAS Optional Assessment 9	February 23 rd -27 th

****As various scores and assessments are documented, students may move into or out of LLI groups based on success and achievement.**

****BAS= Benchmark Assessment System**

****MAP-Fall and Winter MAP Scores will be recorded as students complete the assessment****

****Academic Grades-Reading Content Test Scores and Classwork Assessments will be recorded as students complete the assessment**

Appendix B

Parent Attitudinal Survey (Pre Implementation)

	Disagree Not Likely No	Agree Likely Yes	Neutral No Opinion
Do you think Leveled Literacy Intervention small group will help your child in reading?			
Do you feel your child has the necessary resources to be successful in reading?			
Would you encourage/support your child if they were to participate in an additional reading group that included extra homework but was focused on helping them increase their reading levels and abilities?			
Do you read with your child?			
Do you feel your child struggles to read grade level texts?			
Does your child enjoy reading?			

Appendix C

Parent Attitudinal Survey (Post Implementation)

	Disagree Not Likely No	Agree Likely Yes	Neutral No Opinion
Do you think Leveled Literacy Intervention small group has helped your child?			
Do you feel your child has the necessary resources to be successful in reading?			
Would you encourage/support your child if they were to participate in an additional reading group that included extra homework but was focused on helping them increase their reading levels and abilities?			
Do you read with your child?			
Do you feel your child struggles to read grade level texts?			
Does your child enjoy reading?			